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American Water Works Association *The Authoritative Resource for Safe Drinking Water*

Rhode Island studying long-term water supplies

The [Rhode Island Water Resources Board \(RIWRB\)](#) has established a [Water Allocation Program Advisory Committee \(WAPAC\)](#) to make recommendations about the long-term allocation of the state's water resources. State lawmakers in 1999 authorized RIWRB to devise a fair and equitable allocation of water resources among users and to ensure that long-range considerations of water supply prevail over short-term considerations. The primary function of the committee, which has been broken down into various subcommittees with specific goals, is to identify program objectives, outcomes, milestones and timelines as they relate to water allocations and withdrawals and to implement a water use registration system. According to RIWRB, a registration system is needed that measures the amounts and purposes of water withdrawn so that the state will be able to make "justifiable and legally defensible" water allocation decisions.

Subcommittees, which are now or will be meeting monthly, are expected to provide information on a variety of topics that will allow the WAPAC to develop a results-oriented work plan by the end of next July.

Subcommittees have been formed on the following topics: research, water withdrawal registration system, streamflow standards, priority uses during emergencies, water rights/regulatory authority/compliance, out-of-basin transfers, fees/rates/alternatives, education/outreach/technical assistance, integrated water/wastewater considerations, impact analysis and final workplan/budget.

The agency is now working with US Geological Survey and the University of Rhode Island on a comprehensive inventory of the quantity of surface and groundwater sources currently existing, being used or available to support future uses of watersheds in the state.